

**CLAIMS**

1. A method, comprising:

scanning a user's finger contained within a finger slot of a multifunction peripheral to obtain a biometric image;

5 obtaining a biometric image by scanning a user's finger contained within the finger slot;

comparing the biometric image to a biometric key; and

authenticating a user of the multifunction peripheral based on a match between the biometric image and the biometric key.

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2. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising distributing storage of each biometric key to a file system of which an originator of the biometric key has control.

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3. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising prompting the user for entry of a user name to direct retrieval of the biometric key.

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4. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising distributing the storage of biometric keys associated with authorized users of the multifunction peripheral to workstations assigned to the authorized users of the multifunction peripheral, respectively.

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5. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising basing the storage of biometric keys on a server in communication with the multifunction peripheral.

6. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising basing the storage of biometric keys on the multifunction peripheral.

7. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising activating the  
5 scanner portion of the multifunction peripheral in response to a sensor detecting the user's finger within the finger slot.

8. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising blocking light from entering the finger slot with a resilient shroud.

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9. A system, comprising:  
a multifunction peripheral;  
a finger slot adjacent to an image window in a scanner portion of the multifunction peripheral;  
15 a data collection module configured to obtain a biometric image by scanning a user's finger contained within the finger slot;  
a data evaluation module configured to compare the biometric image to a biometric key; and  
an authenticator module configured to provide access to the  
20 multifunction peripheral based a match between the biometric image and the biometric key.

10. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising distributed  
biometric key storage configured to distribute storage of each biometric key  
25 within a file system of which an originator of the biometric key has control.

11. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising a data collection module to prompt the user to enter a user name to direct retrieval of the biometric key from a distributed location.

5       12. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising distributed biometric key storage configured to distribute storage of biometric keys associated with authorized users of the multifunction peripheral on workstations assigned to authorized users of the multifunction peripheral, respectively.

10      13. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising server based storage of biometric keys, wherein a server upon which the biometric keys are stored is in communication with the multifunction peripheral.

15      14. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising multifunction peripheral based storage of biometric keys.

20      15. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising a sensor switch adjacent to the finger slot to activate the scanner portion of the multifunction peripheral in response to detection of the user's finger.

16. The system of claim 9, additionally comprising a shroud within the finger slot.

17. A processor-readable medium having processor-readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors cause the one or more processors to:

obtain a biometric image by scanning a finger of a user contained within  
5 a finger slot defined within the cover of a scanner portion of a multifunction peripheral;

compare the biometric image to a biometric key; and  
authenticate the user of the multifunction peripheral based on a match  
between the biometric image and the biometric key.

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18. The processor-readable media of claim 17 having processor-readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors cause the one or more processors to prompt the user for entry of a user name to direct retrieval of the biometric key.

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19. The processor-readable media of claim 17 having processor-readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors cause the one or more processors to distribute storage of each biometric key to a file system over which an originator of the biometric key has control.

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20. The processor-readable media of claim 17 having processor-readable instructions thereon which, when executed by one or more processors cause the one or more processors to base storage of each biometric key on storage media contained within the multifunction peripheral.

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